

# 2013 Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department Building Services Mid-Year Activity Report



**Permits & Inspections**

**Affordable Housing Programs**

**Resident Safety & Demolitions**

## **MISSION**

To protect the lives and safety of residents and visitors of Franklin County, preserve the quality of life and contribute to economic development.

**Commissioners**  
John O'Grady  
Paula Brooks  
Marilyn Brown



## OVERVIEW

The Building Services Section of the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is responsible for the unincorporated townships of Franklin County and six contract jurisdictions.

The **purpose** of the Building Services Program is to ensure compliance with the Ohio Residential Building Code for 1, 2, and 3 family dwellings.

Our **services** include plan examinations, new construction building inspections, building permits, electrical permits, HVAC permits, building condemnations, court testimonies, preventative inspections, complaint-based inspections, technical assistance, and consultations.

The Building Services Mid-Year Activity Report serves as a community update on the daily activities of this office as we work to ensure building safety.

This report uses specific measures to outline the progress of the Building Services Section on a monthly basis for the first half of 2013. It outlines the growth and change of a number of our main services such as new home permits and inspections.

## Resources

### Building Services Section

Residential Building Permits  
Franklin County Building Services Section  
614-525-3166  
Building Clerk

### Community Services Section

The following is a list of services and programs offered by the Community Development section of the Economic Development and Planning Department that residents may find useful.

In order to receive these services, recipients must reside in Franklin County but outside the Columbus city limits and meet certain income eligibility guidelines.

- Single Family Rehabilitation Loans
- Accessibility and Minor Home Repair Grants
- Urgent Repair Grants
- Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance
- Sewer Tap-In Assistance
- Women's Employment Services
- Fair Housing Services

For more information visit our website:  
<http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners/edp/>

## Jurisdictions We Serve

The following is a list of townships and jurisdictions in Franklin County that the Building Services section serves. In addition to the Townships we work with, six other jurisdictions contract with us to conduct building inspections and other essential duties.

### Townships

Blendon Township  
Brown Township  
Clinton Township  
Franklin Township  
Hamilton Township  
Jackson Township  
Jefferson Township  
Madison Township  
Mifflin Township

Norwich Township  
Perry Township  
Plain Township  
Pleasant Township  
Prairie Township  
Sharon Township  
Truro Township  
Washington Township

### Villages

Harrisburg  
Lockbourne  
Minerva Park  
Riverlea  
Urbancrest  
Valleyview

*Brown Township*



## SMARTGov

The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department (EDP) entered into an agreement with Paladin Data Systems Corporation in December 2012 to install SmartGov permitting software system for use by the planning, zoning, and building sections of the department. Paladin Data Systems is an independent software and services provider for the planning, zoning, and building community.

SmartGov is a web-based permitting software system that makes it easy for local governments to track, organize, and process building permits and other related documents in a timely and efficient manner. The software also streamlines planning, inspection, code enforcement, and citizen request activities in addition to permits. In the near future, the public will also be able to use Franklin County's SmartGov capabilities to apply for permits, check the status

of applications, request inspections and submit files online. These online options improve the County's ability to serve residents, and ease the administrative burden for both the County and the public.

SmartGov is also compatible with the County's GIS mapping software, allowing for real time tracking of all applications. The software has the ability to track the financial component related to each type of permit, thus making the financial process easier for all parties involved.

Since its installation in late 2012, SmartGov has proved to be an excellent program in meeting the administrative needs of the department. Building Clerk Bertram Walker maintains the software and assists the public in using SmartGov as needed.

### Related Links:

SmartGov website:

<http://smartgovcommunity.com>

Franklin County Building Services:

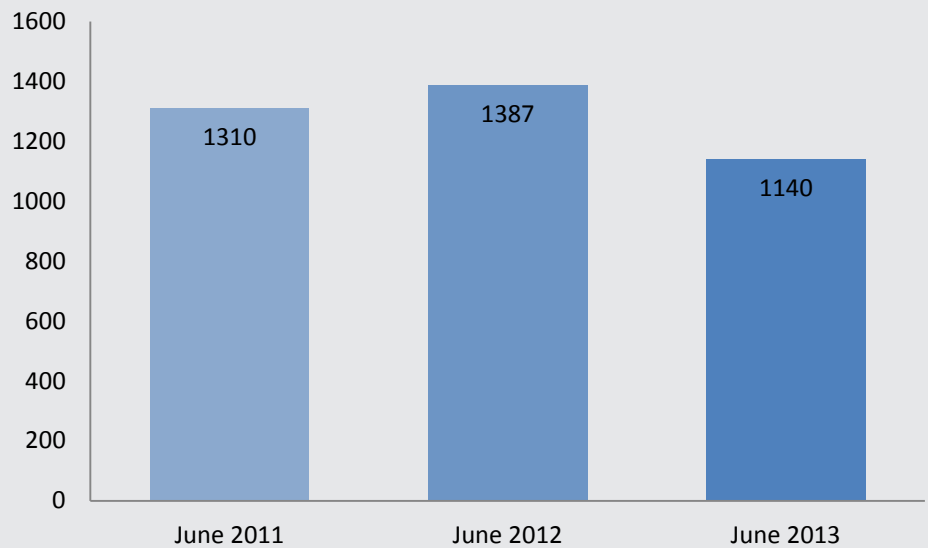
<http://development.franklincountyohio.gov/building/>



# INSPECTIONS COMPLETED

The Building Services section inspects electrical and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems to ensure they are working properly and comply with all relevant Ohio codes.

About 17% fewer building inspections were performed in the first half of 2013 than in the first half of 2012. This decrease can be attributed to a code cycle change in 2012, which prompted many to apply for permits before the new code went into effect last year. Inclement weather can also impact inspection activities, and the cold temperatures during the first few months of 2013 deterred some activity in this area.

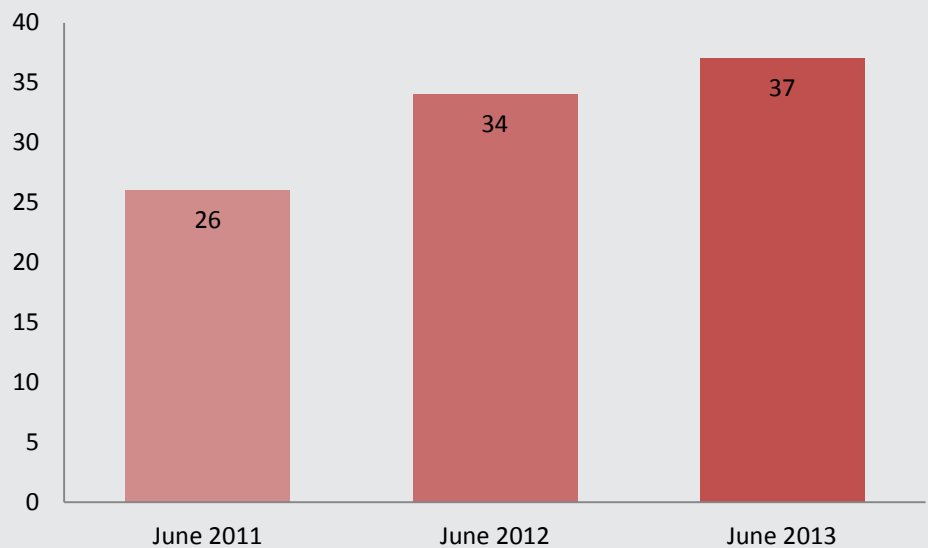


# BUILDING PERMITS FOR NEW HOMES

The Building Services section issues permits to developers seeking to construct new homes in Franklin County townships.

Building permits for new homes are a key indicator of economic growth and are reported nationally to gauge the health of the nation's economy.

Franklin County has seen a 9% increase in the number of new home starts in the first half of this year.



# ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTION

The estimated cost of construction is the amount of money expected to go toward construction projects for which Franklin County has issued permits. This includes new builds, reconstruction, repairs, upgrades, additions, and alterations.

The estimated cost of construction for the first half of 2013 was 20% higher than during the first half of 2012. This reflects an improving economy and correlates with the increase in new home permits as well as an increase in homeowners who are investing in home improvements again after the recession.



# NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM

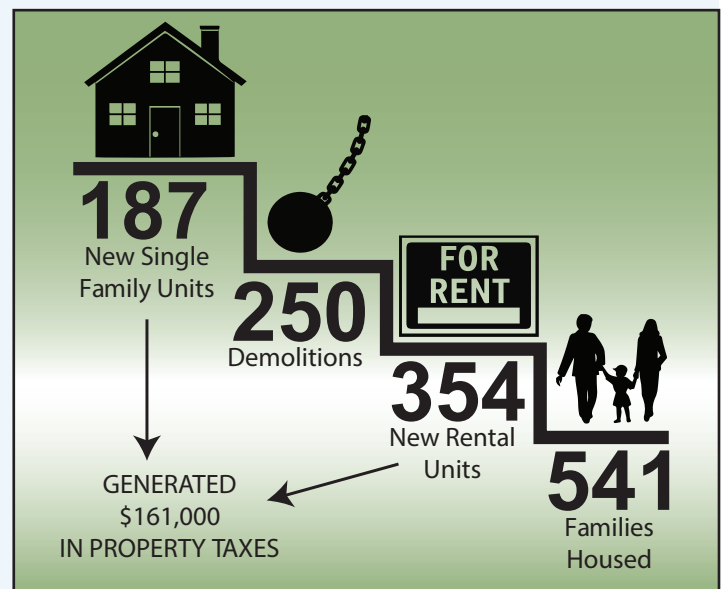
## NSP Overview

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provided funds to state and local governments between 2008-2013 to aid in the purchase of foreclosed or abandoned homes and help fund the rehabilitation and resale of those homes. The purpose of NSP was to rejuvenate local housing markets and provide additional affordable housing to low and moderate income families in the wake of the recent recession. Franklin County was awarded \$5,439,664 of first round NSP funding, and \$3,412,500 in NSP2 funding. In total, the City of Columbus and Franklin County were awarded \$70 million under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program

## Program Outcomes

By Spring 2013, NSP funded projects in Franklin County had reached completion. Franklin County staff and subgrantee organizations gathered together on May 16, 2013 to celebrate the conclusion of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and reflect on the successes of the various local projects funded under the program. Franklin County partnered with many organizations, including

MORPC, Homeport, Campus Partners, and Habitat for Humanity MidOhio, to complete important housing projects and demolish unsafe and abandoned structures. The May 16 celebration recognized some of the most crucial outcomes of NSP, as displayed in the infographic below:





# HOMES ON THE HILL

## Franklin County & Homes on the Hill Partnership

Franklin County and Homes on the Hill, a non-profit Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), entered into a contract agreement in 2010 to rehabilitate eight single-family homes into energy efficient housing for low-income families. The project was funded with \$250,000 in HOME CHDO set-aside funds from HUD, awarded to Franklin County following a competitive national application process for the federal dollars. Franklin County was one of only ten jurisdictions to be awarded a CHDO Green Grant by HUD. This significant reallocation allowed the County to enter into the funding agreement with Homes on the Hill to provide rehabilitated “green” housing in local neighborhoods.

### 39 Florence Avenue

3 Bedrooms - 1 Bath  
1,273 sq. ft.  
\$85,000

Located just south of Broad Street in West Columbus, this home at 39 Florence Avenue was one of several single-family residences renovated under the County’s green housing agreement with Homes on the Hill. The hardwood floors and fireplace were restored, and a bathroom and kitchen were remodeled and updated with modern fixtures.

Additional improvements to the home are less noticeable but address the increasingly important topic of “green” housing. Sustainable features in this house include an energy efficient heating and cooling system, energy efficient windows, updated light fixtures, improved insulation, and new appliances. Each of these enhancements conserves energy and electricity while also reducing the homeowner’s monthly utility bills.

Energy efficient measures in this home were implemented in accordance with Franklin County’s AWARE (Accessible, Water Conservation, Air Quality, Resource Conscious, Energy Efficient) Manual for Sustainable and Accessible Living. This manual provides construction and rehabilitation guidelines for contractors working on affordable housing projects under the HOME and CDBG programs in Franklin County.



*39 Florence Avenue, before rehabilitation*



*39 Florence Avenue, after rehabilitation*



*Restored fireplace*

## TOWNSHIP NUISANCE ABATEMENT DEMOLITION PROGRAM

In August 2012, Franklin County EDP launched the Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program, providing each of the 17 townships in the County the opportunity to address severely blighted and unsafe residential properties through demolition.

Five townships participated in the first and second rounds of demolition (Clinton, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, and Mifflin townships), and 14 structurally unsafe single-family homes were demolished.

In December 2012, EDP sent round three Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program application requests to the county's 17 townships, and identified six residential structures needing demolition. These six structures, located in Mifflin, Franklin, and Madison Townships, will be demolished in 2013 and will exhaust the remaining dollars allocated to this program.

Demolition of these structures not only eliminates unsafe buildings which often harbor pests and attract criminal activity, but the program also improves neighborhood aesthetics and helps stabilize or increase property values in the areas surrounding each blighted building.



*A dilapidated Mifflin Township home is demolished as part of the ongoing Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program.*

## WHO WE ARE



**Bertram Walker** serves the Economic Development and Planning Department as a building permit tech. Bert offers technical assistance regarding building code requirements, ordinances, and building permits.



**Rick Erbe** is a state-certified residential building inspector and an interim residential plans examiner. Rick works directly with hundreds of homeowners and contractors to ensure safe and code compliant projects. He also performs on-site and in-house inspections, including oversight of county AWARE housing projects.



**Mike Kelleher** is a professional engineer with more than thirty-five years of experience in the construction business. He is a state-certified electrical safety inspector, commercial building inspector and residential building official. His responsibilities include overseeing all building services activities in his capacity as residential building official.

## Franklin County Board of Commissioners



Commissioner John O'Grady  
*President*



Commissioner Paula Brooks



Commissioner Marilyn Brown

Produced by:



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